OPERATION OF THE CONOW.

FISH COLLECTION FACILITY

SPRING OF 1980

Muddy Run Ecological Labora Post Office Box 10 Drumore, Pennsylvania 175

Prepared For Philadelphia Electric Company

Fish Facility Operation Report 9

September 1980

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INTRODUCTION

The Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility (hereafter Fish Trap) has been operated since 1972 as part of a cooperative state, private, and federal effort to restore American shad to the Susquehanna River. Early goals of trap operation were to determine the number of American shad that could be collected from the Fish Trap location and to transport as many shad as possible upriver. The current goal is to monitor anadromous fish populations below Conowingo Dam. Operation of the fish trap is under the guidance of the Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Cooperative and has been funded by Philadelphia Electric Company. Results of trap operation from 1972 to 1979 were summarized by McChan (1977, 1978) and RMC (1979).

Objectives of the 1980 operation were to (1) monitor relative abundance of Alosa species in the Conowingo Dam tailrace, (2) monitor species composition of fish in Conowingo Dam tailrace, (3) obtain scale samples from selected anadromous fish species, and (4) collect American shad for radio tagging.

METHODS

Conowingo Dam is located on the Susquehanna River approximately 10 mi upriver of the confluence with Chesapeake Bay. The fish trap (Figure 1) is at the base of the Dam on the west side of the tailrace adjacent to the power house. Attraction water for the trap is provided by two small turbines (House Units). Discharge from the trap is controlled by flow from these turbines and by adjustable weir gates. Trap design has been described by Kotkas and Robbins (1976) and in the Operation and Maintenance Manual (Anon. 1972).

Trap operation in 1980 was scheduled to begin on 15 April, but high river flows (peak of 144,300 cfs on 16 April) delayed installation of trap motors. Operation began on 23 April but problems with the crowder gate occurred. Operation resumed on 25 April and continued daily through 29 April

in an effort to determine if substantial numbers of alosids were present in the tailrace. Normal operation (every third day) began on 2 May and continued through 13 June. Additional days of operation occurred following any day when 5 or more American shad were collected.

The trap was usually fished one half hour before sunrise to noon.

Additional operation occurred whenever one or more shad were taken between 1100-1200 hr. On those days operation continued until no shad were collected for one hour. The trap was also operated at night during 8-9 May in a special effort to collect American shad for radio tracking.

Trap operation was similar to that described in the Operation and Maintenance Manual (Anon. 1972). Fishing time (i.e., time crowder gates were open ranged from 1 to 60 minutes depending upon abundance of fishes; the more fish, the shorter the time. Thirty minute fishing times were most frequently used. An intermediate crowder gate position (12-in. opening) was used throughout the season. The crowder doors were usually closed for 10 to 15 minutes between fishing periods, depending upon abundance of fishes and the time required to process catches.

Attraction velocity and flow were maintained at approximately 6.0 fps and 265 cfs by regulating House Unit discharge and weir gate position.

Velocities were checked with a General Oceanics Model 2030 digital flow meter on 3 and 4 June (Table 1). Observed velocities and elevation differentials between the tailrace and the holding channel were occurrent with results from previous years (Robbins, 1972).

Based on an agreement with the State of Maryland, Susquehanna Electric Company continuously released at least 5,000 cfs from Conowingo Dam from 23 April through 1 June. When the fish trap operated, this flow was usually discharged via the turbine (Unit No. 2) adjacent to the trap in an effort to attract fish to the west side of the tailrace.

Morpholine was released from the fish trap during a 24-hour period every sixth day starting 11 May as indicated in Table 3 and Figure 3. This chemical was used by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission to imprint larval shad reared at their Van Dyke Hatchery (Thompsontown, Pa) and stocked in Susquehanna River tributaries. It was hoped that adults resulting from these introductions would be attracted to the fish trap by morpholine release.

Fishes were processed as described by McGhan (1977). Catches were sorted in a $1.8 \times 3.7 \times 1.2$ m tank supplied with running river water. Most catches were counted or subsampled and released to the tailrace. When mortalities due to dissolved oxygen deficiency were likely, the number of fish of each species was estimated and the catch was released.

American shad were dip netted from the sorting tank into a similar tank supplied with running river water. Healthy, actively swimming fish were either equipped with radio tags, fin clipped (left pelvic fin), or tagged with floy anchor tags. Tagged fish were observed for a short time to determine condition, and healthy individuals were released into the tailrace via a water filled pipe or box. Sex, length and spawning condition were determined and scale samples were taken when possible. Weight was taken only for the few individuals which died prior to release.

Length, weight, sex and scale samples were also taken from blueback herring, alewife, striped bass, and striped bass x white bass hybrid. Common names of fishes (Bailey et al. 1970) are used throughout the text and tables. A list of common and scientific names is given in Table 2.

River flow and temperature at the trap during trap operation are summarized in Figure 2. Flow ranged from 17,800 to 51,000 cfs. It fluctuated among days but generally decreased from April through June. Temperature ranged from 56.0 to 73.5 F and increased steadily through the season.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 30 days of fish trap operation, 372,380 fish representing 11 families and 43 species were caught in 403 lifts with a total fishing time of 117 hours (Table 3). Predominate species were gizzard shad (74.1%), channel catfish (10.5%), white perch (7.2%), carp (2.4%), and walleye (1.1%). Anadromous clupeids (alewife, blueback herring, American shad, and hickory shad) comprised 0.2% of the total catch. No American shad and relatively few resident fishes were collected during the one night time effort (Table 3) on 8-9 May 1980.

The clupeid catch has steadily declined since 1973 when anadromous clupeids comprised 35.1% of the total. In 1980, there was no substantial run of blueback herring and the collection of herring per lift never exceeded 60. The total catch of alewife (9) was the same as in 1979. This is the third consecutive year that fewer than 10 alewife were captured. This catch has declined from 143,880 alewife in 1973. One hickory shad was present in the 1980 catch. This was the first time it has been taken in the facility since 1975.

A total of 139 American shad was collected between 23 April and 13 June (Table 3, Figure 3). Four of these had been previously captured and marked at the trap. One fish radio tagged on 11 May was recaptured on 7 June. A second fish was floy tagged on 11 May and recaptured on 10 June. The third fish was floy tagged on 31 May and recaptured on 3 and 7 June. Twelve shad were successfully radio tagged and released.

Two peaks in catch of American shad occurred (Figure 3). The first occurred in late April at water temperatures of 58 to 59 F and flows of 37,800 to 42,000 cfs. The second peak occurred in late May and early June at water temperatures of 67 to 73.5 F and flows of 17,800 to 32,300 cfs. A similar pattern of shad catch was reported in previous years.

Life history data and scale samples were obtained from 132 American shad, 201 blueback herring, 5 alewife, 87 striped bass, and 216 striped bass x white bass hybrids.

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Summary of hydraulic measurements made at the Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility, 3-4 June 1980. Table 1.

	Difference in Elevation (ft) Between Tailrace and Holding Channel	1.2-1.5	2.5	
	Weir Gate 2	9-9	∞	
(£t/s)	Weir Gate 1	2-9	∞	
Velocities (ft/s)	Holding Channel	H	2	
	Weir Gate Setting (ft)	5.1	4.5	
	Discharge (cfs)	265	360	

Table 2. List of scientific and common names of fishes collected in the Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility, 1980 (according to Bailey, et al., 1970).

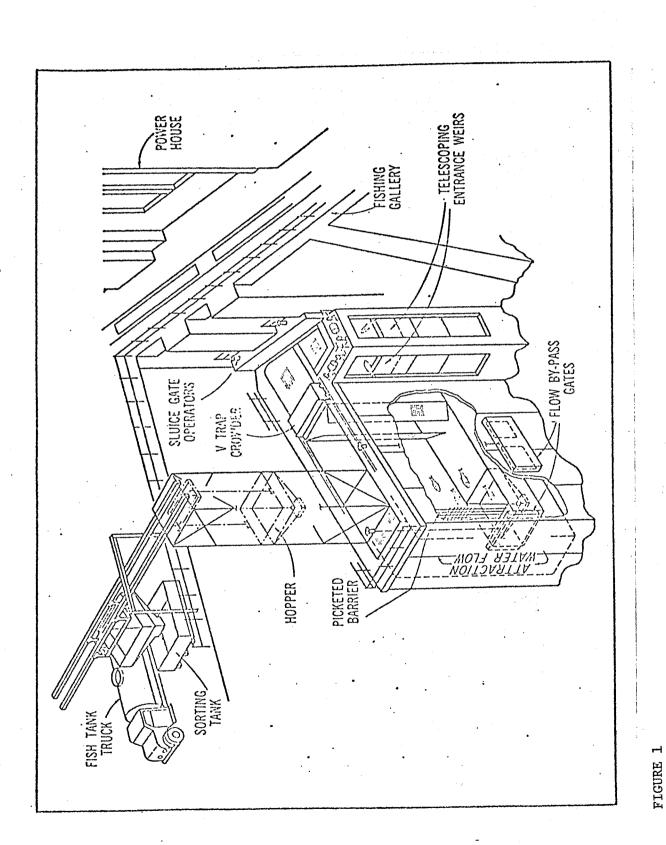
Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Соппоп Name
Family - Petromyzontídae Petromyzon marinus	Lampreys Sea lamprey	Family - Ictaluridae Ictalurus catus Ictalurus natalis	Freshvater catfishes White catfish Yellow bullhead
Family - Anguillidae Anguilla rostrata	Freshwater eels American eel	<u>Ictalurus</u> nebulosus <u>Ictalurus</u> punctatus	Brown bullnead Channel catfish
Family - Clupeidae Alosa aestivalis Alosa mediocris	Herrings Blueback herring Hickory shad Alewife	Family - Percichthyldae Morone americana Morone saxatilis M. saxatilis x M. chrysops	Temperature basses White perch Striped bass Striped bass x white bass
Alosa sapidissima Brevoortia tyrannus Dorosoma cepedianum	American shad Atlantic menhaden Gizzard shad	Family - Centrarchidae Ambloplites rupestris Lepomis auritus	Sunfishes Rock bass Redreast sunfish
Family - Salmonidae Salmo gairdneri Salmo trutta Salvelinus fontinalis S. fontinalis × S. namayoush	Trouts Rainbow trout Brown trout Brook trout Splake	Lepomis cyanellus Lepomis gibbosus Lepomis macrochirus Micropterus dolomieui Micropterus salmoides Pomoxis annularis	Creen sunish Pumpkinsed Bluegill Smallmouth bass Largemouth bass White crapple
Fabily - Esocidae Esox luctus Esox masquinongy E. masquinongy x E. luctus	Pikes Northern pike Muskellunge Tiger muskie	Pomoxis nigromaculatus Family - Percidae Perca flavescens Stizostedion vitreum	black crappie Perches Yellow perch Walleye
Family - Cyprinidae Cyprinus carpto Nocomis micropogon Nocemisomus crysoleucas Nocriopis amorenus Notropis abudomius Notropis spilopterus	Minnows and carps Carp River chub Golden shiner Comely shiner Spottail shiner Spottin shiner		
Family - Catostonidae Catplodes Cyptinus Catostonus commersoni Hypentellum nigricans Moxostona macrolepidotum	Suckers Quillback White sucker Northern hog sucker Shorthead redhorse		

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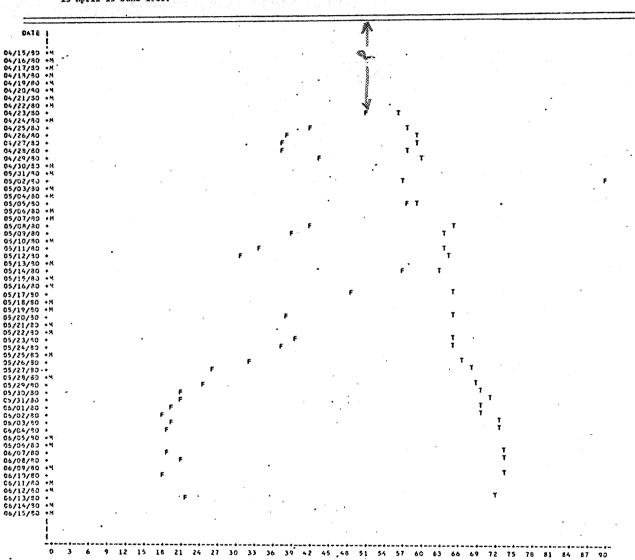
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	TABLE 3 (CONT.)	DATE NG. LIFTS FIRST LIFT LAST LIFT CAST LIFT CAST LIFT OPERATING TIME (HRS) FISHING TIME (HRS) ANE WINER FLOW (KCFS) AVE LATER TEMP. (F)	A454ICAN EEL SLUEBACK HERXING HICKOXY SHAD ALEAICAN SHAD ATELICAN SHAD ATELANTIC MENHADEN	RAIN-UM TADUT VACOR'S TADUT RADATA RESERVANCE RASERLANCE CARP	RIVER CHUB GULDEN SHINER GUSELY JHINER - SPOTTALL SHINER SPOTTALL SHINER GUILLBACK WHITE SUCKER	NOATHERN HOS SUCKER SMATHEAD REDHORSE AMITE CATFISH VALLON SULHEAD DADAN SULHEAD CLANNEL CATEISH CLANNEL CATEISH STRIPLO PASS	ROCK BASS ROCK BASS SCELL SUPEISH PURCHINSED BLUEGILL RANDOTH BASS RAITE EXAMPLE BLACK CAMPTE	YELLCA PERCH RALLEYE SALLANDES STRIPED 3858 * RHITE BASS TREE MUSKIE SPLAKE



Schematic drawing of Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility, Anonymous (1972).

FIGURE 2
River flow (F) and water temperature (T) at Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility, 15 April-15 June 1980.



RIVER FLOW (KCFS) AND TEMPERATURE (FAHR)

FIGURE 3

Daily catch of American shad at the Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility, 15 April-15 June 1980.

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